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Conference Abstract

DemoCamp: BRIT Digitization Appliance

Jason H. Best ‡

‡ Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, United States of America

Corresponding author: Jason H. Best (jbest@brit.org)

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Abstract

In recent years, the natural history collections community has made great progress in accelerating the pace of collection digitization and global data-sharing. However, a common workflow bottleneck often occurs in that period immediately following image capture but preceding image submission to portals, a critical phase involving quality control, file management, image processing, metadata capture, data backup, and monitoring performance and progress.

While larger institutions have likely developed reliable, automated workflows over time, small and medium institutions may not have the expertise or resources to design and implement workflows that take full advantage of automation opportunities. Without automation, these institutions must invest many hours of manual effort to meet quality and performance goals.

To address its own needs, BRIT developed a number of workflow automation components, which coalesced over time into a suite of tools that operate on both an image capture station as a client application and on a server that provides file storage and image processing features. Together, these tools were created to meet the following goals:

- Simplify file management and data preservation through automation
- Quickly identify quality issues
- Quickly capture skeletal metadata to facilitate later databasing
- Significantly reduce time between image capture and online availability
- Provide performance and quality monitoring and reporting
- Easy configuration and maintenance of client and server

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The client and server components together can be considered a “digitization appliance”: software integrated with the specific goal of providing a comprehensive suite of digitization tools that can be quickly and easily deployed on simple consumer hardware. We have made this software available to the natural history collections community under an open-source license at https://github.com/BRITorg/digitization_appliance.

Keywords

data mobilization, software, workflow

Presenting author

Jason H. Best